

# Lake Oroville Recreation Surveys *Preliminary Results*

Presented to the Oroville Relicensing  
Recreation Work Group  
September 26, 2002

# Goal of Presentation

- Give a “preview” of what has been accomplished and what will be learned through 3 survey efforts
  - Similar Recreation Sites in NoCal (on-site)
  - Household Survey (phone)
  - Lake Oroville Visitor Survey (on-site with mail follow-up)

# Similar Recreation Sites Survey

- Objectives of Survey
  - Obtain a “regional” recreation visitor sample at similar sites that could be used to provide context and comparisons to Lake Oroville survey data
  - Determine knowledge and impressions of Lake Oroville
- Targeted similar survey groups (boaters, campers, day users, trail users if present)



# Similar Recreation Sites Survey

## Survey Locations and Samples

- Total sample n=293 visitors
- Shasta Lake
  - USFS, 30,000 acres
  - n=104 visitors
- Black Butte Lake
  - Corps of Engineers, 4,460 acres
  - n=77 visitors
- Lake Berryessa
  - Bureau of Reclamation, 20,000 acres
  - n=112 visitors

# Similar Recreation Sites Survey

## Selected Results for Comparison to Lake Oroville Survey

- Mean crowding on water rating = 3.8/9.0
- Wait to launch = 24%
- Staying overnight = 56%
- Top 4 activities = motorboating, waterskiing and wakeboarding, swimming, relaxing
- Satisfaction w/recreation experience = 7.0/9.0 ("satisfied")

# Similar Recreation Sites Survey

## Oroville-related Questions

- Been to Lake Oroville = 31%
- Time since last visit = 52% within last year, 15% 1-2 years, 24% more than 2 years
- Visits to Oroville in last year = Mean 1.3, about half did not visit
- Satisfaction with last visit = 5.5/9.0 ("neutral" to "somewhat satisfied")



# Lake Oroville Area Visitor Survey

## Visitor Sample Obtained To-Date

- On-Site: n=2,279 (preliminary data n=313)
- Mailback: n=776
- Surveys completed at 40 recreation sites
- Top 8 locations:
  - Lime Saddle Boat Launch/DUA 178
  - Loafer Creek Campground 174
  - Spillway Boat Launch 144
  - North Forebay DUA 235
  - Monument Hill Boat Launch/DUA 146
  - Riverbend Park 118
  - Bidwell Canyon Boat Launch/DUA 141
  - OWA - Levee Road, West of Feather Riv. 157

# Lake Oroville Area Visitor Survey

## Selected Descriptive Data

- Hometown: Oroville, Yuba City, Chico, 90+ others each with <6 respondents; 95% + live in California
- Visitation Pattern: 62% are “regular” visitors, 61% visit in Spring, 82% in Summer, 40% in Fall, 28% in Winter
- Areas Visited: 46% main basin, 31% South Fork, 30% Middle Fork, 22% lower North Fork, 21% upper North Fork, 14% Forebay, 18% Afterbay, 13% OWA, 11% Feather River, 5% Div. Pool



# Lake Oroville Area Visitor Survey

## Selected Descriptive Data (continued)

- Group Size and Makeup
  - Mean of 3.8 adults and 2.3 children
  - Total group size average about 6
- Residence:
  - 50% Butte County
  - 39% non-Butte County
  - 11% no address given
- Overnight Visitors:
  - 50% of visitors stayed at least one night
  - 32% of visitors stayed in a drive-in camp, 15% in "other" accommodation (relative/friends home, cabin)

# Lake Oroville Area Visitor Survey

## Selected Descriptive Data (continued)

- Other Northern California recreation places visited in last 12 months:
  - Lake Tahoe 43%
  - San Francisco Bay/Delta 40%
  - Sacramento River 35%
  - Lake Almanor 26%
  - N. Fork Feather River 24%
  - Lake Shasta 20%

# Lake Oroville Area Visitor Survey

## Selected Perception/Preference Data

- Rec. Site crowding rating:
  - mean of 3.1/9.0
  - 3 = "slightly crowded"
- Scenery rating:
  - mean of 6.5/9.0
  - 6.0 = "appealing"
- Want new rec. activities/special events = 25%
  - Examples: buoys for skiing, more shoreline camping, swim beach



# Lake Oroville Area Visitor Survey

## Selected Perception/Preference Data (cont.)

- Perceptions of Management, Water Conditions, User Interactions – “Big Problem” (25 items)
  - Access to shoreline 17%
  - Exposed land during low water 24%
  - Shallow areas during low water 20%
  - Water level fluctuation 22%
  - Encounters with PWC's 12%
  - All others 10% or less

# Lake Oroville Area Visitor Survey

## Selected Perception/Preference Data (cont.)

- Perceptions of Number/Amount of Facilities
- 27 items listed on survey
- For most items, 25 to 35% responded "too few"
- For 5 items, >50% responded "too few"
  - Floating campsites 52%
  - Docks or temporary moorage 54%
  - Boat-in primitive campsites 55%
  - Swim areas 56%
  - Developed DUAs along shore 57%

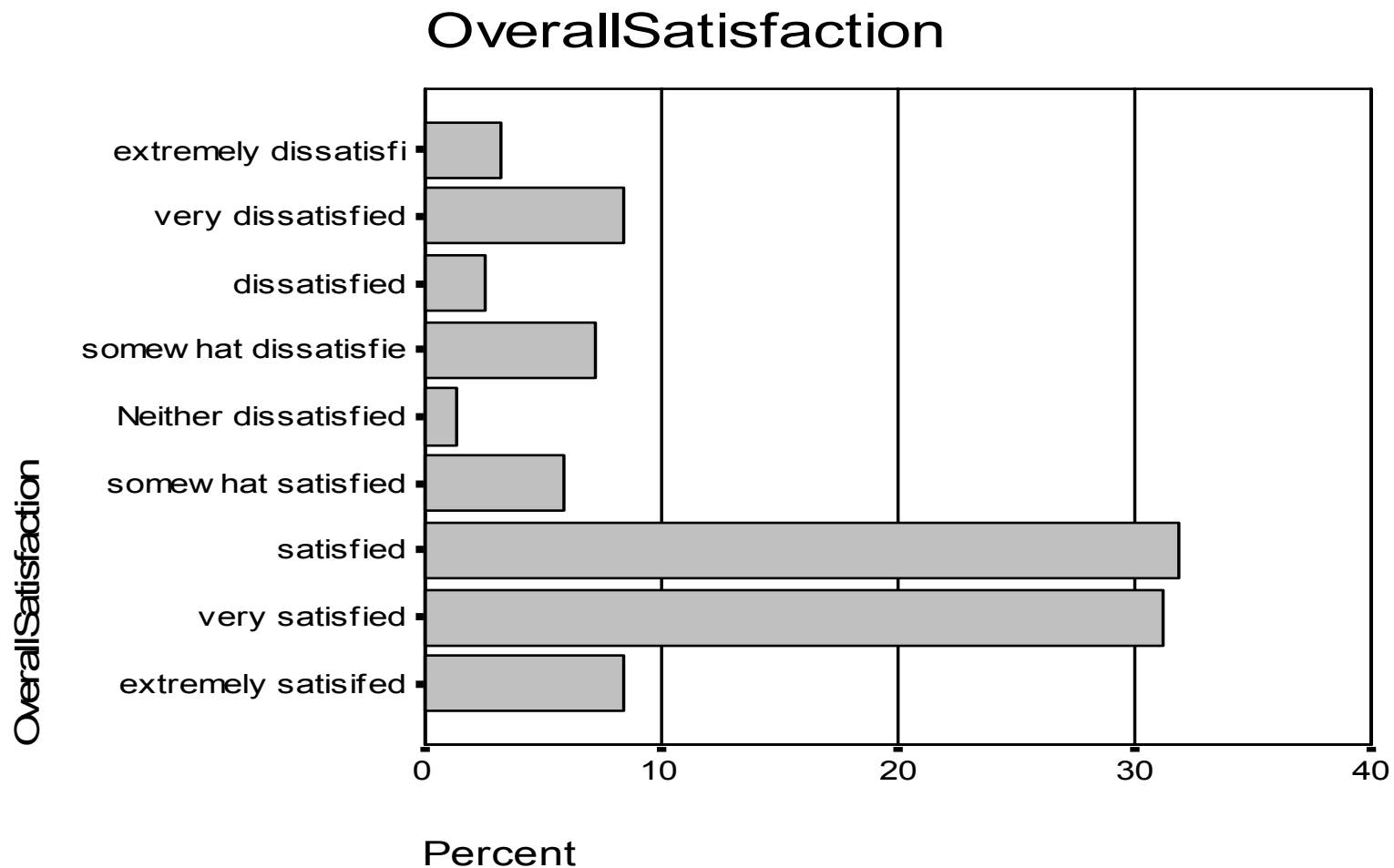
# Lake Oroville Area Visitor Survey

## Selected Perception/Preference Data (cont.)

- Overall Satisfaction with recreation experience at Lake Oroville Area
  - Mean = 6.5/9.0 (6.0 = "somewhat satisfied")
  - "Dissatisfied" to "extremely dissatisfied" = 14.2%
  - "Satisfied" to "Extremely Satisfied" = 71.4%



# Lake Oroville Area Visitor Survey



# Lake Oroville Area Visitor Survey

## Selected Perception Data - Boating

- On-water crowding rating: 3.1/9.0 ("slightly crowded")
- Had encounters on the water that put self at risk = 8.5%
- Observed boating activity that put others at risk = 9%
- Have to wait to launch = 24% (mean=11 min.)
- Satisfied with boating experience = 67%

# Lake Oroville Area Visitor Survey

## Selected Perception Data - Fishing

- Fished at Lake Oroville Area before = 54%
- Fished in area from 1 to >100 days in past 12 months
- Fished with a guide = 5%
- Fished in a tournament = 5%
- Crowding in fishing area = 2.5/9.0
- Feel knowledgeable about regs. = 74%
- Feel regs. Allow a quality experience = 89%
- Satisfied with fishing experience = 71%



# Lake Oroville Area Visitor Survey

## Selected Perception Data – Trail Use

- Primary type of trail use:
  - Hike/walk 68%
  - Bike 15%
  - Horse 10%
  - Multiple 7%
- Repeat Users of trails = 56%
- Crowding on trails = 1.9/9.0
- Negative encounters on trails = 13%
- Satisfied with condition of trails = 89%

# Next Steps

- Analyze complete summer visitor survey data
- Determine number of surveys for each of the 18 activity groups
- Contact hunters, trail riders, others this fall
- What else?